

Salud!

POEMS, STORIES AND SKETCHES
OF SPAIN

BY AMERICAN WRITERS

John Malcolm Brinnin • Erskine Caldwell • Kenneth Fearing
• S. Funaroff • James Neugass • Edward Newhouse •
Joseph North • Prudencio de Pereda • Kenneth Rexroth
• Edwin Rolfe • Norman Rosten • Vincent Sheean •

A LITERARY PAMPHLET

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OF SPAIN BY AMERICAN WRITERS

A Literary Pamphlet, Edited by Alan Calmer



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To the Men of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade

James Neugass

ON THE ROAD

DEATH RAY

Driving down the alpine artillery gardens of Mansueto, the night sky suddenly lit with a vast sheet of cherry-colored mauve-red fire. I drove 5 K., without it getting larger or smaller. At first it seemed something like the far reflection of the neon lights of a big city. Peculiar velvety cherry color, full of purple, and not at all like the rusty glow of an avenue nor like the tomato red of a burning town. Faint bars of white striations moved through It. The whole Thing was too big to have been started by man, at even his pulp-magazine worst.

Troops moving down the mountain were terrified. Morale, uncracked by my god how many weeks of broiling in the icy Teruel furnace, was completely gone.

Whenever I stopped to inquire for the whereabouts of the 15TH, I asked about the meaning of the Thing in the sky.

"Flame-throwers."

"No."

"Liquid Fire."

"Campesino drove seventeen kilometers into the fascist lines today. Took Celadas and set it on fire."

"It's a magnetic field the fascists sent up to bring down our planes."

"I know what it is," whimpered a German lieutenant, tough enough looking to frighten children, Tom Mix and Dick Tracy. "Hitler is trying his new death ray on us."

Is it possible that the Aurora Borealis visits skies as southern as those of Spain?

I came home yesterday afternoon when the Ribas family was having dinner. Of the twelve who sat at the table, none were between the ages of ten and fifty. I was asked to eat. When I looked at the size of the single earthenware jug in the fireplace, I answered that I had already had supper. An assortment of pots and tripods hung at the side of the fireplace. A beaked olive-oil lamp, of the type used by the Greeks and Phoenicians, hung in the center of the combined kitchen, dining and living room. The iron lamp and the fireplace fittings were so well scrubbed that they looked like pewter. Unvarnished chairs and chests were worn with washing. The floor was of earth.

The mother lifted the crock from the fireplace and emptied a steaming mass of potatoes, smelling indubitably of meat, into a large dish in the center of the table. Children and their elders took spoons and ate directly from the single plate. This method of eating is called, in Aragonese, "*tot un plat*." When the potatoes were eaten the meal was done.

While I ate, I tried to think of how I could organize a can of milk for the children. I could speak only to the farmer himself; the others could not understand or talk Castilian.

Ribas passed the wine, in a Catalan pitcher. You throw your throat back, hold the narrow spout two or three inches from your parted lips, stop breathing, and gurgle. To stop drinking, you suddenly jerk the vessel upwards and back. The fashion is to hold the spout as far up in the air as skill permits and open the lips as little as possible. Some Spaniards extract a front tooth, for greater suavity of drinking.

Glasses are very rare in Spain. I don't suppose there is more than one to a house.

Conversation with Ribas after dinner:

"What is fascism?" I ask him.

The entire family strains to see how much of my Castilian they can understand. This is very likely the first time they have ever been so near to a foreigner.

"*Es una cosa horrible*," Ribas answers, as much perplexed as

if I had asked him, "What is a stone?" "It's . . . it's . . . it's a very bad thing."

"But what is fascism?" I insist.

The ten-year-old son answers, "*Es matar*" (killing). The entire family nod their heads.

"It is killing and gold," the father adds. Everyone is satisfied.

"To what political party do you belong?" I ask.

"Yo? . . . Yo? . . . *Yo soy revolucionario, como todos.*" He was a revolutionary, like everybody.

"What does 'revolutionary' mean?"

"Liberty," he answers, as if he had never thought what was the meaning of revolutionary. "*La libertad,*" he repeats, smacking his lips. Again the family approves.

"To what political party do you belong?"

Ribas was confused.

"*De los matafascistas,*" he answered. "I believe in the fascist-killer party."

"But which party is that?"

"That is every political party," he answered, having a good deal of trouble with a word as long and as abstract as "politico."

"What is communism?"

"I don't know . . . *significa, significa—tractores!*"

"Communism means 'tractors'?"

"And the other parties also—communism, socialism, anarchism—" Ribas' children and wife listened with amazement to the assembly of big words which formed on his lips with so much difficulty. Every ear was strained. At any moment we could expect to hear the final answer to the meaning of life: "... it all means . . . machines for the land. Machines!" Ribas finished his sentence and slapped his legs with a gesture of a chess player who has just called "check-mate."

SNIPER

I had returned to the Soldado Desconocido for a fitting when I heard the heavy clatter of big anti-craft on the tops of nearby buildings and the slamming of many iron shop-fronts.

Customers and salesmen went to the rear of the store, where sewing girls, by the light of a single candle, were chirping like sparrows under eaves waiting a storm. One of them cried a little.

It was plain that the fitting had to be postponed. I got tired of waiting and went out into the empty halfdark streets. One place is as good as another in a city during a raid.

As usual, the planes had come at the hour between day and dusk, when the sky was full of swarming shapes and shadows. Savoia-Marchettis rode in from the sea at a great altitude, cut their engines and glided down on the fuming chimney pots of the city—impossible to hear and very hard for anti-aircraft gunners to see. It was too early for searchlights to have been turned on.

The last of the mothers and children had fled to the *refugios*. Large open cars, each mounting a machine-gun, toured the empty halfdark streets at high speed.

The clatter of the anti-aircraft continued although I could hear no engines. The fascists must be riding silent and high.

Heavy crashes, more muffled and resonant than anything I had heard at the Front, came from the many cellars of the stricken city.

Began to feel as if I would rather be at the Front. When people are dug out of a murdered house not more than one in twenty is found to have been killed by metal. I would rather be at the Front, where six and seven storey buildings do not stand in all their dead weight ready to slaughter everyone in, under and near them.

Our planes are not at the Front and not over Valencia. Where are they?

At first I thought it was anti-aircraft shrapnel that buzzed past me like mosquitoes in a dark room. Then I realized that I had heard several rifle reports.

I immediately found a dark doorway.

If one of the touring cars with the machine-guns, whose purpose I now understood, came down the street I would stop it. Meanwhile I kept my eyes on the buildings across the way. The vote in 1936 had been very close.

An officer came down the street. Just as soon as he had reached my doorway, a spear of red light shot out of a second-floor window. The officer wheeled into my doorway and pulled his pistol.

He did not know where to shoot. When I said that I had seen the flash of the rifle he gave me his gun. It was a good Soviet 7.65 Colt. I emptied it into the window while the officer took down the address of the house. Glass fell to the sidewalk.

This was the first time I had shot at fascists. I have begun to pay them back a little of the lead and cupronickel they poured in my ambulance on the Alfambra road.

The officer put another clip into his gun and we crossed the street. Both doorways that led into the building from which the sniper had shot were barred with sheet-iron bomb coverings.

I walked slowly along the streets. By the time I reached the Metropole the sound of planes, Ours, had reached my ears.

Lights went on, the doors of the movies in the Plaza Castelar blazed and the city resumed its normal, abnormal life.

LOST

The Chofer and his car were lost.

Afraid to turn on his headlights, he moved from kilometer-stone to stone, descending at each miniature white tombstone to read the figures.

The Chofer was afraid to stop, afraid to move, afraid to call out to the many men whom he knew must be up in the hills on each side of the road. The sounds of the battle were on all sides of him.

He wanted to turn his car off the road, on which he imagined all eyes and guns were trained, but the ditches were deep and the hazards of the fields and hillsides great.

He stopped at one more kilometer-stone. When the three men who rose beside it spoke to him in English, he suddenly realized that the pistol in his hand had almost gone off at them.

"Both ends of this road are cut," said an English volunteer. "What will we do, try to get out through the hills or drive right through Them?"

"My car can run much faster than we can," answered the Chofer.

"Got enough gas?"

"Well . . . come on. Load!"

"First put away that silly popgun. Here, take these."

The Chofer dropped six Mills bombs into the belly of his sweater and drove off, both doors swinging wide on their hinges.

He drew his clasp knife and laid it on his lap.

A dynamited culvert had cut the road. The Chofer sank his front wheels into the ditch. His car sagged, then climbed out into the fields.

His three passengers ran out of the car. The Chofer thought, until he heard the explosion of the first grenade, that they had left the ambulance to show him the way back to the road.

Reaching down the neck of his sweater, the Chofer lifted a Mills bomb, pulled its pin and pitched it on the three, five, six black shapes that ran at him. He threw himself on the ground as the shrapnel of his bomb and something very soft and wet skipped along the earth near him. He knelt, drew another grenade, pulled the pin, threw and bent to the ground.

As he went back to his car, a desire to count the dark bundles of clothing that lay on the field came over him.

He never knew if it was one of the dead who had gotten up or if it was still another fascist who came at him but the shape that ran on to the knife in his left hand and dropped off its broad blade lay, afterwards, as quietly as any one of them.

One of the English was trying to start his car.

"So you're back, comrade? We thought you had . . . never mind."

"Not tonight, Josephine. Let's get out of here!"

Before the ambulance had climbed to the road all three Englishmen had to get out and push her.

Before the Chofer reached the clumps of men whose lack of rifles told him that he had regained what would be Republican territory for at least another half hour, all of the grenades in his car had been thrown out of its windows at shapes his car had run off the road.

This was the first time that he had thrown a grenade and the first time that he had killed.

GHOST

An English nurse called Phoebe once worked at the 35TH Division Hospital in Granen during the summer of 1937. Phoebe was a sturdy, stable, well-trained and dependable girl, like most of the English nurses in Spain. Like a few of them she was extremely prissy. Accustomed to handling naked men on stretchers, on the operating table, in the ward or in the morgue, she was nevertheless particular about sleeping next to the unwounded drivers and medical corps men who were sometimes lucky enough to get a bed for the night in the ward which comprised the only International Brigade sleeping quarters in the province of Saragossa.

Granen was very near the Huesca front and had suffered severely from air raids ever since the installation of the hospital. Early one summer morning big black turkeys flew down the road crying, *brangg bronng bronng cronng*, as they dropped their one hundred and two hundred kilo eggs.

Phoebe heard these unpleasant sounds and ran out of bed to the hospital trench, where she found that she was dressed only in a pair of the very light mesh pants called "scanties." Shivering not with cold or fear but with shame, for her tall full form was burning all over with blushes, she waited in the trench for the turkeys to move on. When it seemed that the great tri-motored silver birds had headed back to their ugly roost, she left the trench and ran to be the first to enter the hospital.

But there was no hospital. One of the turkeys' largest eggs had mistaken its roof for a nest, which the structure now resembled: a great nest of broken plaster, tile and beams, far beneath which must prissy Phoebe's clothing lie.

Ever since that time Phoebe haunts the half-lit corridors and *trijes* of all International Brigade hospitals in Spain, still dressed in nothing but light mesh scanties, still kept warm by the blushes

that cover her ample figure, still holding her hands where the Venus de Medici holds hers, and wailing:

"Who has my clothes, where are my clothes, who has my clothes, what have they done to them?"

TRANSSUBSTANTIATION

Four dead cavalrymen fully dressed and unspotted by blood lay on stretchers in the hospital courtyard. Saxton, blond tall young English surgeon, knelt beside one of them. He had rolled a sleeve past the elbow of a gray arm.

"What do you think you're doing, Doc?" I asked, suddenly remembering that he was our blood transfusion expert.

He did not answer.

Angry, I leaned over the surgeon's shoulder. The single vampire tooth of a big glass syringe was slowly drawing the blood out of a vein in the inside of the dead cavalryman's forearm. The vessel filled and Saxton stood.

"New Soviet technique," he said, holding the syringe between his squinting eye and the late winter sun. Purple lights shadowed the glistening bar of ruby.

"Seldom get the chance. Most of them are pretty well empty when they go out. Those four over there were in one of the clay dugouts in the wall of the main street. No timbers in the roof. Direct hit. Asphyxiated, all of them. Their comrades brought them up here. Thought we could help. Their bad luck," Saxton pointed to the four gray young clay-stuffed mouths, "was our good luck. We are running short on donors, and the transfusion truck has been too busy."

"You mean . . . that you're going to . . .?"

"Well, first I'll have to type and test it . . . have to hurry."

I touched the bright tube with my hard black fingertips. Was the glass warm with the sun or with human life?

Now I understand why we must win. Men die but the blood fights on in other veins and their purpose fills other hearts.

Edwin Rolfe

ELEGY FOR OUR DEAD

There is a place where, wisdom won, right recorded,
men move beautifully, striding across fields
whose wheat, wind-marceled, wanders unguarded
in unprotected places; where earth, revived, folds
all growing things closely to itself: the groves
of bursting olives, the vineyards ripe and heavy with
glowing grapes, the oranges like million suns; and graves
where lie, nurturing all these fields, my friends in death.

With them, deep in coolness, are memories of France and
the exact fields of Belgium: midnight marches in snows—
the single-file caravan high in the Pyrenees: the land
of Spain unfolded before them, dazzling the young Balboas.
This earth is enriched with Atlantic salt, spraying
the live, squinting eyelids, even now, of companions—
with towns of America, towers and mills, sun playing
always, in stone streets, wide fields—all men's dominions.

Honor for them in this lies: that theirs is no special
strange plot of alien earth. Men of all lands here
lie side by side, at peace now after the crucial
torture of combat, bullet and bayonet gone, fear
conquered forever. Yes, knowing it well, they were willing
despite it to clothe their vision with flesh. And their rewards,
not sought for self, live in new faces, smiling,
remembering what they did here. Deeds were their final words.

David Wolff

THE DEFENSES

White sky, and moonlight famous in our eyes;
locked by the tree, self-turning, kissed,
lost in our fierce imaginative love.

Then in morning heavenly the moon goes calm and transparent;
then we walk to our work, speaking subtly or smiling,

Writing in freedom, the thought moving among the papers
like a familiar bird; or looking, or asking;
the faces of everyone lighted almost with motives of love.

And then:—but the cheerful radio ends in music,
the wrist-watch continues its simple seconds, and our hands
drop in the midst of lunch:—what was it?—
and feel the sick thrill of disaster.

Reading aloud in a room in the city and there came
extras at midnight like a violent heart-beat:
we too, some time, must, must

Set guns on the marble sills of the university;
our friends dead; the fascists controlling the insane asylum;

The pale eyes of our people; the bitter retreat;
defending the square of burned grass in the park;

And that night the open faces, the bandages black with wounds,
the alive going slowly back, entrenching by stones, by brook,
cursing the fatal moonlight that brings bombardment.

Yes by this tree we kissed, for which the shells are searching
minute by minute, may find and may destroy.

O cities across an ocean, Yenan, Chungking, with dark steel
guard yourselves! And you, capital of our world,
Madrid, Madrid!—since your great trenches hold

Death back from love; and if they hold, keep safe
our trees, our harbors, and our happiness.

S. Funaroff

TO FEDERICO GARCIA LORCA

Guitarist, singer of folk-songs,
strolling player who in the wilderness
strayed where the black pigs bred,
beasts in the ruins of a castle,
wild boars in the towers, grunting
the lord's prayer in the minarets,—
rooting in the stubble of moorish arches,
roman columns, armor of knights
and broken lances in moats;
and on the battlements
mangled limbs of the greek heroes;
swine grazing in the weeds of romances,
snouts in the leaves of the classics.
Devoured, the poems bled; yours the blood:
spilled by the shrewd bargainer,
March, the merchant, illiterate dealer in swine,
gun-runner who sought to still your voice
with gun-fire: the cries of a huckster
trading a nation.

Lorca, you who were the morning song of Spain,
the song is on the lips of the people!

Prudencio de Pereda

THE DENUNCIATION

They used to come up in pairs, and only very seldom. Before the war they used to come up to the pueblo from the town only on very rare times, and the lone pair of them would come walking heavily and firmly along the white road, swinging their un-cocked rifles and talking easily. Then when the people saw them go into the pueblo, they would come out to their doorways, talking in excitement and saying, "The Civil Guards! The Civil Guards are here! What can be the matter? I wonder what's the matter?"

And they kept looking after them; but they never stayed there looking long because they knew that nothing serious was the matter. Nothing serious was ever the matter in the pueblo. The Guards were there probably to see if Luciano's permit to make and sell sausages was renewed and in good order, or to find out why Anastasio did not register his new ox-cart. And soon, in the night, long after the Guards had had a glass of wine in the tavern and gone back to town, the people in the pueblo found out that it had been some little thing like that, and that it was all over now.

But after the war came, they never walked up in pairs. They came often, now, and always in a body or with someone else. They come in groups of four or six and with their rifles on their shoulders and cocked. Quietly. Almost always a very quiet German officer dressed in plain clothes was with them when they came, and, once in the night, they came in a truck with Moors to take Blas away. They never stopped to drink now.

One Saturday afternoon the war had been driving for a year and a month. Santos and Pedro, the two Guards who had been in Villarcayo for fourteen years, drove up to the pueblo in a car with the German officer. They stopped at the tavern and talked to Benito while the officer stayed in the car and watched them.

Santos, who was doing the talking, asked Benito to have his whole family at the tavern tomorrow morning after mass. The whole family? said Benito. He did not understand. He had no family. What whole family? The Varona family, Santos said. Your wife and you, Bernabe your brother-in-law, and the cousin from Bocos. What's the matter? Benito said. Is anything wrong with us? Nothing is wrong. No, nothing! Santos told him. It's just a formality. A formality! They want you to make a statement. A statement? said Benito. About loyalty? We've shown our loyalty very much. You know that! We've shown it. No, said Santos, not that. It isn't about that. It's nothing. We'll be here. We'll tell you what to do. We'll help you. Oh, said Benito. All right. All right!

Then, on Sunday, the mass at Bocos was celebrated an hour later than the masses at Mozares and Campo where Benito and his brother-in-law lived, and so Benito and his wife Felipa, and her brother Bernabe, had to wait a little while for the cousin from Bocos to come. They sat on the benches in Benito's tavern and talked a little. They talked about how the war against the Marxists was going, but they could not stay on that long. It made them all feel self-conscious to talk about it. They had been talking about it for so long! And all the little actual information that they had about it had been used up very long ago and they did not like to repeat themselves. They talked, then, about the crops and the live stock and then they did not say anything for a while. They tried to think only about what this thing that was going to happen to them could be, and no one thought of the right thing.

Soon, ten minutes before the cousin from Bocos would come, and while they were still silent, Santos and Pedro drove up with the same German officer in the same car. This time he got out. He got out first and then waited for Santos and Pedro and fol-

lowed them into the tavern. He had a thin leather brief-case under his arm, and when they came into the room, Bernabe and Benito stood up. "Good days!" Santos and Pedro said together.

"Very good ones!" first Felipa and Benito, and then Bernabe said.

The German nodded his head silently and the Guards and he stood near the door awkwardly. "Did you advise the one in Bocos?" Santos asked Benito.

"Yes, but the mass is late there," Benito said to him.

"He won't come for a while then, eh?"

"No, I don't think that he will," Benito said. "You want a drink?"

"No. Thanks!" Santos said. "No drinks." Benito looked at Pedro. Pedro shook his head. The German was watching them.

When the three of them had come in, Bernabe had looked at them and suddenly felt uncomfortable. Without even trying to he had remembered suddenly that he wanted to plant some late August beans in the Villanueva finca, and now he wanted to go out and plant them right away. Quickly. The Bishop had given permission for work to be done on Sundays because of the big harvest. Now, Bernabe looked at the Guards and the German in the room and he wanted to be out of it. He felt cold and wanted the sun on him. He looked over at his sister. She seemed calm. Then he joined his hands between his open knees and began to move his thumbs one over the other and to watch them very seriously.

The Guards felt the tenseness that was growing up in there and they tried to make conversation, first with the others and then with themselves, but they could not do it. Felipa and Benito answered them in monosyllables and Bernabe kept his head down like that. They stood by the door with their guns held up and looked out the side window. What the hell is the matter with Bernabe? Santos thought. He always likes to talk and laugh so much. Especially on Sunday when everybody can sit around and talk and drink.

And then, five minutes had passed. The German pulled out

his watch and looked at it. Benito, who was nervous and excited, went out into the yard and looked down the road into the pueblo. "He's not coming yet," he said when he came in. "He'll come," Felipa said.

They began to wait again in silence. Two men came in from the pueblo and had drinks. They left as soon as they had finished. Everyone watched them as they went out. How long minutes can be, Santos thought. He looked out the side window. A car sounded down in the pueblo. Let it be he, he hoped.

It was a car from Bocos. The driver got out and came inside. He had a note from the cousin for Benito. Benito took it quickly from him and his excitement over the note made him forget the disappointment he felt when it was not the cousin who had come. Now he read the note slowly to himself at first, and then out loud. Emilio, their cousin, could not be there. Some business had come up while he had been at mass, and he must go to attend to it at once. Let the officials contact him later in the day, if they would. With a kindly embrace, your cousin, Emilio.

Emilio, who had come back to Spain after making much money in Mexico, had property in all parts of the province and he was called many times to go to these places. To fix rents or rates. To survey a crop.

"Are these important things that he has to do?" the German asked out in clear, well-pronounced Spanish.

"He has a lot of business," Felipa said. "He has a lot of money to look after, Senor."

"It must be important," Benito said. "I told him that he had to be here."

Santos looked at the German. He made a sour face and shrugged his shoulders. The German nodded at him. All right! Santos cleared his throat. "Senores!" he said, "y Senora!" to Felipa. All of them turned to look at him. He got ready to say something.

"Please, Senor," the German said in the clear and well-pronounced Spanish. "May I?" Santos looked at him in surprise and then shrugged his shoulders again. The German turned his eyes to all the others.

"I am not sure that you all know why you are called together here," he said. He spoke as if he were reciting or reading carefully. "It is true that it is to go through a formality, but, at the same time, a very important formality. It is the spirit of it that makes it important. That counts. Now ..." He stopped and looked at Bernabe. "You have a brother in New York, no?"

"Yes, my brother Esteban lives in New York with his family."

"Right! He has many sons. Now, there is one among them also called 'Esteban' who was here in Spain at one time. Is that not correct?"

"It is correct," said Bernabe. "He was here with us three years ago. He did not stay long, though."

"A very good boy," Felipa, Bernabe's sister, said. "He lived here with us." They began to talk freely now. It was becoming definite. The thing was becoming definite and they were getting out of vagueness and mystery. They all began to think of Esteban.

"You all knew him, then?" the German asked. He looked around. They nodded their heads. "I should say that we did," Felipa said. "We knew him," Bernabe said. "Yes," Benito said slowly.

"All right, then," the German said. "That's all right. . . . This boy has become an active Marxist! He is now actively engaged in aiding the cause of the Madrid Marxist Government. We must ask you all to denounce him. In public!"

"How . . . ?" Benito said.

"Denounce him?" Felipa said. Bernabe did not say anything. The German looked at them all with a tense face.

"You have understood?" he asked them. He was growing a little excited. This was important. "You must publish this denunciation of him in the local paper. It will be copied in all Burgos. The importance of this is evident, of course."

"But how . . . ?" Benito began to say again.

"A formal denunciation," Santos said hurriedly. "A mere formal statement. You express your regret that he has been misguided and led into the Marxist camp."

The German looked at Santos. "This is not an order, Senor Santos," he said curtly. "The denunciation must be a spontaneous

one, deriving immediately from the feelings of these people."

"What feelings?" Bernabe said.

"Your true feelings," the German said. "The only feelings that you can have in this case. . . . You must demonstrate that ties of family and blood are sacrificed in our work."

"What has he done?" Felipa said.

"What?"

"What has he done? How has he been active? You said that we must denounce him. Why do you want us to do this?"

"Oh," the German said, "I understand." He took a paper out of the thin case. He looked at it and then held it up for them to see. It was a mimeographed sheet with a crudely made newspaper head at the top of it. Bernabe stood up a little to look more closely. "It is written in English," the German said. "You can't read it." "No," said Bernabe, but he did not stop peering at it.

"But what is it?" Benito said. "Is it a paper?"

"This is the front page of a copy of the newspaper that your nephew, Esteban, edits and writes almost entirely alone," the German said. "It is issued daily under his supervision in the Marxist trenches for the American and English Communists who are aiding the Madrid Government. We have secured three copies of it. They are of three widely separated dates. So that it can be seen that he has put out many of them. His work has had volume."

"Esteban does this?" Benito asked him.

"Esteban Varona, your nephew, is almost the entire force behind this paper. We have proof of that."

"Where, though? Where does he do this?"

"He is working in Madrid. We believe he must go to the front many times."

"Esteban is in Madrid?" Felipa and Bernabe said together.

"Yes, he is in Madrid."

"Esteban is in Spain," Bernabe said as if he were telling himself a thing in a loud voice. "Our nephew is here in Spain."

"Cono!" said Benito.

"Not here, Senor," the German said to Bernabe, "in Madrid. In Marxist Spain!"

"Yes, I know that. But he's in Spain! He's here."

"He always said that he wanted to come back," Felipa said.

"Esteban in Spain," Bernabe said again. He could not get over it.

"Did you know about his work?" the German said abruptly.

"Did he ever tell you anything about it?" He wanted to get on.

"We knew that he was making himself a writer," Benito said.

"He used to do some writing here," Felipa said. "Very innocent things. Once the cat peed on it," she said. She laughed nervously.

"Did he let you read it?" the German asked her.

"It was in English," Bernabe said. "He wrote in English."

"I see. Did he ever speak to you of radical and Marxist things?"

"No, never!" Bernabe and Felipa lied together.

"To you?" the German asked Benito.

"I didn't talk to him very often," he said. "We were not together many times. We spoke of other things. We spoke of the family."

"Were you not very interested in what was happening in the country at that time? In the new republic?"

"Hombre, we hated it," Benito said excitedly, trying to please, "but he was a visitor and we didn't want to worry him with what was happening here."

"It wasn't his business," Bernabe said.

"We wanted him to enjoy himself," Felipa said. "This was his first visit to his father's pueblo."

"But you hated the republic, you say?" the German said.

"Yes," said Benito, "we hated it."

The German looked around then, watching every face. "I think you will be willing to sign this denunciation," he said. He said it very quietly.

No one said anything. Then Bernabe looked at him. "You want us to denounce him," he said. "If we denounce him we regret that he is our blood, eh?"

"You denounce him as a Marxist. You will completely deny him. Yes. He is an enemy! He must be negated."

"I won't denounce him," Bernabe said. The others listened to his voice and then watched the German's face. It twitched slightly. "Why will you not?" he said.

"He's my brother's son. I know him. I love him. He exists for me!"

"He's a good boy," Felipa said. "Truly he is. But the thing is that he's very young. He doesn't know about these things."

"He knows about them enough to work them against us."

"He isn't working against us," Bernabe said. "He wouldn't want to work against us. To hurt us. I know that!"

"We need calmness here," Benito said. "Let's be calm now."

"Is the denunciation a strong one?" Felipa said.

"Formal, merely formal," Santos said to her.

"Formal?"

"Please!" the German said. "Please! The language will be formal, but we must understand, and those who read it must understand, that a true spirit of denunciation exists and is sincerely felt there."

"But it isn't," Bernabe said.

"You say that, Bernabe," Santos said to him. "You're giving this too much importance."

"Senor Bernabe is perhaps in agreement with some of the ideas of his nephew," the German said very quietly. "Perhaps these things mean something to him."

"Senor Bernabe is a Catholic," Bernabe said, "and a Spaniard. I defend Spain and the Church against the people whom I think are trying to destroy it."

"Like all of us," Felipa said.

"I don't understand," Benito said. "I don't understand all this."

"That's all right," the German said. "Please, now." He took another paper from the very thin brief-case and held it up in the air while he looked along the bar for a clean spot. When he found it, he laid the paper flat on it, and then took out a fountain pen and opened it and handed it to Benito who had been watching him and was nearest to him. Benito took the pen and shrugged his shoulders. The German pointed to a spot at the bottom of the paper and Benito signed his name there with

great effort. He handed the pen to his wife and slid the paper over a little. Felipa looked at Bernabe. "Do I sign it, Bernabe?" she said.

"If you think that you should," said Bernabe. She looked at him for a long minute. Then she turned and signed it. The German took the pen and held it out to Bernabe. His face was set. He was finished with talking.

"Keep it," Bernabe said. "I won't sign."

"This is a serious matter, Senor."

"I believe it."

"You know what you're doing then?"

"I know it well."

"He has twenty-four hours before he signs," Santos said over the German's back.

"That is true," the German said.

"It doesn't matter," Bernabe said. "I won't change with the sun. I won't change." He got up from the bench and began to move towards the door. "Adios," he said. "Until later." He walked past the Guards to the door. He was a big man and he moved a little awkwardly.

Bernabe walked along the white highway from Mozares to Campo. Campo was his pueblo. This was the pueblo that he had stayed in. Bernabe was the youngest of three brothers in the Varona family. The eldest had gone first to Madrid and then to Vigo and made a fortune there before he died in middle age, and the second had gone to Madrid and then to Cuba and New York and made a fortune before he lost it in the depression of 1929. Bernabe had stayed in their pueblo and worked the old lands and raised a family of thirteen children. There were only six of them left living, but they were beautiful children and this was a beautiful country.

Bernabe was a fool for staying in that hole, his brothers had said. You had to go out of there to get someplace. He loved his brothers very much and tried hard to understand about what they meant, but he could not do this. He just stayed there working and sweating, and being happy when a boy came, when the

crop was good, and when the pigs grew big and fat; and waiting always for the letters from his brothers and the rare, very rare visits. Once, after twenty-five years, Esteban had come from New York. The brother who had been his chum in youth, and then, ten years after that, the little Esteban had come to Spain, but he was not little, but tall and handsome and bright, and clean.

Bernabe had been surprised then. It had been a very pleasant surprise. This kid had been from New York, the greatest city in the world, but he talked to you and went along with you as if you were his equal and he was very happy to be with you. He had said, too, that he wanted to try everything that his father had done. So he minded the oxen, milked the cow, plowed and wrestled hay, and even cleaned out the stable and the pigsty with that smell there that choked you.

Bernabe remembered now how he had always liked to stay in Campo. He didn't like Benito because Benito thought too much about business. He wanted to stay at Bernabe's house with Bernabe and the wife that he loved so much and that anyone could see that he loved so much.

I should denounce him, they say. I must deny him, now. He is not my own blood and a typical Varona, the way I hoped Varonas would always be. No! No, no, no! Not I! I don't deny him. He is of the blood. He is truly! In New York there are many Marxists and they must have told him many things. They always have things to tell. We ought to know as much about our part of this. Why don't they tell us more so that we can talk, too, and tell others?

He could not think that side of it out. He only shook his head and went home. After dinner he went out to the Villanueva finca with the beans.

In the night he sat around the open fire in the small kitchen of his home and listened to his wife and two daughters talk about the other daughter who was out "serving" in Burgos. He was waiting for his little son Angel to come in from a visit to a friend's house.

Bernabe did not want to talk. He sat and watched the coals

of the supper fire grow first gray and then black, and sat and listened to the voices of his wife and daughters.

When Angelito came in he went over and stood by the bench his father was sitting on and leaned his shoulder against the side. Bernabe put his arm around him.

"Angel," his father said, "Esteban is here."

"Papa!" Angel said. He turned to look at his father.

"What?" the others said. "Esteban is here?"

"He's in Spain. He's in Madrid."

"In Madrid?" Bernabe's wife said. "There in Madrid. Oh, Bernabe!"

"He's been here a long time."

"But Papa," one of the daughters said, "in Madrid! That's no good." The disappointment showed all around.

"But he's here in Spain," Bernabe said. "He's here."

The next morning at ten o'clock Santos and Pedro came up along the highway from the town, walking slowly in front of a car that the German was driving. Two Moors on horseback rode behind the car. Santos and Pedro kept looking at the faces of the people working in the fields that lined the highway. Then Santos saw Bernabe cutting wheat in his finca on the highway just before it turned into Campo. Santos broke away and walked through the cut stalks up to where Bernabe was bent over cutting.

"Bernabe," he said.

"Hello Santos," Bernabe said. He did not get up.

"Are you going to sign it, Bernabe?"

"No Sir!"

"Think it over, Bernabe. You're getting too serious about it."

"It's a very serious thing," Bernabe said. He stood up with the cut wheat in one hand and the sickle held in the other. He looked at Santos and then over at the car and the Moors.

"Do you want me to go into town with you?"

"Sign it, Bernabe. Don't you want to sign it?"

"No, Santos. Thanks for the consideration."

"They want you to come in to town, then."

"All right," Bernabe said. Santos turned around and began

to walk to the car. Bernabe tied the stalks in his hand together. He used one of the stalks as a cord. Then he laid them on the pile of stalks and put the sickle down beside the pile. He walked after Santos.

When he had seen them start to come over, the German had turned the car around and now they were ready to go. Bernabe was to ride in the back seat of the car with Santos. He came up to the road and stopped and stood looking at them all. Santos was standing at the door with his hand on the knob and waiting for him to come and get in. Pedro was in the front seat already. He stared straight ahead.

Bernabe looked at Santos and then down the road to where the car was pointed. The car was pointed down towards town. It would go riding fast into town. He did not like to go to town since the war had begun. They had changed the buildings and there were many people there that he did not know. There was darkness down there now. Dark places and dark spots on the streets. They might do things to you there in the dark.

While here he was in Campo. The beautiful earth with the beautiful children on it and the wife that he loved very much and that anyone could see that he loved very much. Would they do anything here?

He turned around and began to walk slowly back across the field. "Bernabe!" Santos yelled. "Bernabe!"

He heard him, but he did not stop. Here! They could do it here, if they wanted to. "Bernabe!" Santos was growing excited. "Varona! Bernabe!"

Bernabe walked slowly, slowly on the earth at Campo. Here! Here! He could not see that one of the Moors had turned his horse to the side and was taking careful aim at his slowly moving back. He went on and on slowly over the stalks he had just clipped and heard Santos yell only once more in the voice growing hoarse with excitement before the first bullet came, and then the second in quick succession.

The second crashed through the base of his skull just before he fell. He was dead when they turned him over and the blood began to flow freely into the earth.

Kenneth Rexroth

TWO POEMS

I

The great geometrical winter constellations
Lift up over the Sierra Nevada,
I walk under the stars, my feet on the known round earth.
My eyes following the lights of an airplane,
Red and green, growling deep into the Hyades.
The note of the engine rises, shrill, faint,
Finally inaudible, and the lights go out
In the southwest haze beneath the feet of Orion.

As the sound departs I am chilled and grow sick
With the thought that has come over me. I see Spain
Under the black windy sky, the snow stirring faintly,
Glittering and moving over the pallid upland,
And men waiting, clutched with cold and huddled together,
As an unknown plane goes over them. It flies southwest
Into the haze above the lines of the enemy,
Sparks appear near the horizon under it.
After they have gone out the earth quivers
And the sound comes faintly. The men relax for a moment
And grow tense again as their own thoughts return to them.

I see the unwritten books, the unrecorded experiments
The unpainted pictures, the interrupted lives,
Lowered into the graves with the red flags over them.
I see the quick grey brains broken and clotted with blood,

Lowered each in its own darkness, useless in the earth.
Alone on a hilltop in San Francisco suddenly
I am caught in a nightmare, the dead flesh
Mounting over half the world presses against me.

Then quietly at first and then rich and full bodied,
I hear the voice of a young woman singing.
The emigrants on the corner are holding
A wake for their oldest child, a driverless truck
Broke away on the steep street and killed him,
Voice after voice adds itself to the singing.
Orion moves westward across the meridian,
Rigel, Bellatrix, Betelgeuse, marching in order,
The great nebula glimmering in his loins.

II

Autumn in California is a mild
And anonymous season, hills and valleys
Are colorless then, only the sooty green
Eucalyptus, the conifers and oaks sink deep
Into the haze, the fields are plowed, bare, waiting.
The steep pastures are tracked deep by the cattle,
There are no flowers, the herbage is brittle.
All night along the coast and the mountain crests
Birds go by, murmurous, high in the warm air.
Only in the mountain meadows the aspens
Glitter like fish moving up swift water,
Only in the desert villages the leaves
Of the cottonwoods descend in smoky air.

Once more I wander in the warm evening
Calling the heart to order and the stiff brain
To passion. I should be thinking of dreaming, loving, dying,
Beauty wasting through time like draining blood,
And me alone in all the world with pictures
Of pretty women and the constellations.

But I hear the clocks in Barcelona strike at dawn
And the whistles blowing for noon in Nanking.
I hear the drone, the snapping high in the air
Of planes fighting, the deep reverberant
Grunts of bombardment, the hasty clamor
Of anti aircraft

 In Nanking at the first bomb,
A moon faced willowy young girl runs into the street,
Leaves her rice bowl spilled and her children crying,
And stands stiff, cursing quietly, her face raised to the sky.
Suddenly she bursts like a bag of water,
And then as the blossom of smoke and dust diffuses,
The walls topple slowly over her.

 I hear the voices
Young, fatigued and excited of two comrades
In a closed room in Madrid. They have been up
All night, talking of trout in the Pyrenees,
Spinoza, old nights full of riot and sherry,
Women they might have had or almost had,
Picasso, Velasquez, relativity.
The candlelight reddens, blue bars appear
In the cracks of the shutters, the bombardment
Begins again as though it had never stopped,
The morning wind is cold and dusty,
Their furloughs are over. They are shock troopers,
They may not meet again. The dead light holds
In impersonal focus the patched uniforms,
The dog eared copy of Lenin's Imperialism,
The heavy cartridge belt, holster and black revolver butt.

 The moon rises late over Mt. Diablo,
Huge, gibbous, warm; the wind goes out;
Brown fog spreads over the bay from marshes;
And overhead the cry of the birds is suddenly
Loud, wiry and tremulous.

Norman Rosten

THE MARCH

After the first mile snow fell: down the tall valley
of Wall Street softly on our faces like children's tears
fell the snow

remember the young died remember the sudden bomb
remember the hurt nerve how it tortured before death
O remember from what hired gun

UNITE AGAINST WAR!

(capital letters against the sky!: take it, wind,
over continents! Make it electric at night, a big sign!)

MAKE MADRID THE TOMB OF FASCISM!

While a girl sprints from the line, solicits from traffic smiling
"Come on, mister, it's for yourself," clinking the donation box;
and in a passing car a man raises his hand from the wheel
the fist says Give it to them between the eyes
so they can feel it!

MADRID!—TOMB!—FASCISM!—

that's how they hear us twenty floors above the town:
voice goes that high see the burst of paper come down!
Volume in huge sound like waves fades returns
superbly in sheets of wind destroys distance: fades and
echoes back like thunder passed over but still strong...

Madrid—*Madrid*—MÁDRID!

Edward Newhouse

THEY ALSO SERVE

As soon as I felt the train in motion I lit my pipe and threw the match away.

"What's the idea?" said a man, obviously from across the aisle.

"This is the smoking car, isn't it?"

"That's no reason for throwing a burning match under my seat."

"I'm sorry," I said, "I thought I put it out. I didn't see it burning. I'm blind."

"You don't have to get fresh about it. That's how fires get started."

"I'm blind," I said. "Really blind. Lost my sight."

He was silent for a moment. Then he may have noticed that I was not looking directly at him.

"Oh, excuse me," he said. "I'm sorry. I should have known. Excuse me, will you, pal?"

"It's all right."

Sure, it's all right. No hard feelings, pal. Do the same for you some time. Feel free to call on me at any time. Sympathy wrapped and delivered, with a nominal mailing charge. Due to unforeseen circumstances the firm has been forced to carry an overstock of the commodity in recent months. Get it now while the getting is good. In another week or two I may be in the market for it myself. So far though, I've been doing all right in the way of sympathy, masculine, feminine, androgynous and irrational. Even some of Joe Castello's sympathy has been irrational and Joe has been rather an important person to me and to the world at large. Joe has been in charge of sending the boys over to Spain. When he brought me to the station a little while ago he said, "You'll regain your sight again."

"Sure, I will," I said. "Now that Hitler took over Austria maybe there'll be an influx of Viennese eye specialists and one of them will find a cure for blindness due to lead poisoning. Then I'll be grateful for the experience and be a better man for it. A few months more or less out of my life, what the hell. I'm beginning to reckon in months now. Make way, Joe, man entering his third month of blindness."

Very few people call it blindness. Some refer to it as *it*. How did *it* happen? Is there nothing that can be done about *it*?

No, friend, not a thing. Doctor advised me to take a rest with my immediate family for the time being and get over the mental shock. So that's why I'm in the smoking car of the Pennsylvania Railroad, throwing lighted matches around on my way to McKeesport. When I get there I'm going to put in a few months getting over the mental shock in the bosom of my immediate family who is a night watchman at the Hennessey Foundry. A very decent elderly chap. Sent me a telegram saying to come as fast as possible. All right, Dad, I'm coming.

Nobody likes to call it blindness. They never ask how I happened to go blind. When they don't call it *it*, they say how did you lose your sight?

Just an accident, nothing more. Some plumber got careless and installed lead pipes without tin linings and I drank too much of the water that came through, and too soon. I say too soon because if I had waited some time, a deposit of insoluble salts would have formed on the inside of the pipes and I wouldn't be blind now. And as I said to Joe Castello in the waiting room, says I, "Nobody but you could have prevented that."

"How do you mean?" said Joe.

"You could have let me go to Spain when I asked you."

"I couldn't," Joe said. "Even if I'd given my okay the District Committee would have stopped you. They haven't had an educational director like you in years. It was bad enough with the Party sending some of its best forces over for upwards of a year. They couldn't have spared you in the District."

"You should have let me go. You could have fixed it. I might have been blinded by a piece of shrapnel over there and maybe

there would have been some sense to that. From just a strictly utilitarian point of view I would have continued to be useful for a time as an agitational symbol. There wouldn't have been this sensation of complete uselessness."

"There's nothing to keep you from teaching classes as soon as you come back."

"I tried teaching a new members class last week. I was telling them about the campaign to keep the Olympics out of Japan and some girl pops up and says the campaign is over because Japan has already declined. That must have happened the day my radio was out of order. How the hell am I going to teach them about the Central European situation when I can't even look at a map? How the hell am I going to teach them Lenin when I haven't read over half his published work? In just half the time I spent going to movies in the past ten years I could have read everything he wrote. Don't you think that's ironical, Joe? I do. In most foreign countries you can't even own a copy of Lenin and here where I'd still have the chance to study, I go blind in an utterly senseless accident."

"You come back from McKeesport and I'll read you all the Lenin you want," said Joe Castello. "I could do with some reading myself."

Sure, sure, Joe, sure. You're all right. I'll be all right too. First I have to settle down in McKeesport and get over the mental shock. Both doctors thought that advisable. After I get good and settled, perhaps I'll be able to take it gracefully, the way John Milton did. "Doth God exact day-labour, light deny'd, I fondly ask." Do they really also serve who only stand and wait and weave baskets? I wouldn't know as yet. First I have to settle down in McKeesport and get over it. I'm on my way now.

The train stopped at Manhattan Transfer. I lit my pipe again and this time I took care to extinguish my match. A man took the seat next to mine. I felt his suit brush against my hand.

"I understand you lost your sight," he said. "Fellow in the men's room told me. I thought you might want somebody to talk to. I know how it is. I was blind for a month once when I was just about your age, some thirty years ago. Gibbon's my name."

"How do you do."

"I'll move along if you don't feel like talking. I know how it is."

"No, stay here," I said.

"I'm in the construction business," he said. "Have been for forty years. I got blinded on the job once and I couldn't see for a month. There was an explosion and some steel particles got in my eyes. They took them out with a magnet, one of these powerful magnets. Maybe they'll be able to do something for you one of these days. How far are you going?"

"McKeesport."

"You know a man called Skinner there? Runs a radio shop."

"No, I haven't been there since I was a kid."

"I'm going to Harrisburg where I had a construction business," he said. "I sold it. I'm supposed to be retired now. Have a drink?"

"What is it?"

"Rye. Three Feathers."

"Thanks, I will."

I took a drink and I could hear him take one too.

"Don't mind me," he said. "I was out celebrating last night and I still got a load on."

"I hadn't noticed it." This was true. I hadn't noticed that he was an old man either until he said he'd been in the construction business forty years. How to appraise voices will be one of the things I'll have to learn.

"I was celebrating a decision I made last night. It took me a long time to make it but now it's made and I'm glad it's over with."

At first he had probably come to sit with me out of pity but now he wanted to talk about himself and he was asking for sympathy. Old man, you've come to the right place. A recent bankruptcy sale has enabled us to purchase, most advantageously, an extensive variety of slightly used but desirable, adjustable and portable sympathies.

"Would you believe it," he said, "I was supposed to sail for Ireland on the Queen Mary yesterday. Had the ticket and everything. Ran into an Irish couple who just come back from Waterford and my, the stories they had to tell. My boy, the Irish

people is just as poor as they was in 1890 when I come to this country. I says to myself, why should I go back to Cork and listen to a lot of miseries when I can't do nothing about it? There ain't a one of my kin but will expect me to give a helping hand. I ain't got any more than will see me through to the end of my days. And why should I take my good money out of this country where I earned it? I set to thinking and here I am, on my way back to Harrisburg. I got one good look at New York and I says to myself there's plenty more to see right here in this country. See America first."

"You're right," I said.

"I always wanted to see the Grand Canyon," he said.

"The Grand Canyon's not so much. You want to spend some time in the Feather River Valley."

"Have another drink?"

"Thanks."

"If you ever want to buy a radio in McKeesport," he said, "get it from this fellow Skinner. Don't let his name fool you. He's a good man and if you tell him you know me he'll treat you right."

"I'm pretty sure my father has a set but if he hasn't I'll see that he gets one from your friend. A radio's the only way I can keep in touch with events now."

"You going to live with your father? I'm glad to hear that. Blood's thicker than water. I thought of that when I bought the ticket to Ireland but I don't want to listen to all my kin's miseries. It's bad enough reading about them in the letters they send."

I didn't want to hear any more about his kin. I didn't want another drink either because I hadn't eaten since morning and a third slug would have gone to my head. I could tell the old man was drinking by the sounds he made.

"I think I'll take a snooze," I said.

"Let me fix your seat." He tilted it back. "Put your feet up here and call me if you want anything. I'll be sitting across the aisle."

"See you later."

Sure, I'll see you. I'll see every damn thing. I'll see America first. The Feather River Valley and the night on Mojave Desert

and the view from the Empire State and the kids playing stickball in front of my house and the Breughel at the Metropolitan and the girl in white diving into the breakers at Santa Monica, I'll see them all. Particularly the girl in white. She'll read to me in the evenings. All the girls will want to read to me in the evenings. Won't we have some grand times, though, in McKeesport, Pa.? I'm on my way there now to get over the mental shock.

Kenneth Fearing

THE PROGRAM

ACT ONE, Barcelona, Time, the present

ACT TWO, Paris in springtime, during the siege

ACT THREE, London, Bank Holiday, after an air raid

ACT FOUR, a short time later in the U.S.A.

EAT ZEPHYR BONBONS

(do not run for the exit in case of fire
the Rome-Berlin Theater has no exits)

SUZANNE BRASSIERES FOR PERFECT FORM

CAST, IN THE ORDER OF DISAPPEARANCE

infants

women and children

soldiers, sailors, miscellaneous crowds

With 2,000 wounded and 1,000 dead

12,000 wounded and 6,000 dead

100,000 wounded and 50,000 dead

10,000,000 wounded and 5,000,000 dead

(Scenes by Neville Chamberlain

costumes, courtesy of Daladier

Spanish embargo by the U. S. Congress

music and lighting by Pius XI)

SMOKE EL DEMOCRACIES

TRY THE NEW GOLGOTHA FOR COCKTAILS AFTER THE SHOW.

Erskine Caldwell

IN BARCELONA

You stood in the doorway wondering to yourself if you would be alive after the next bomb fell, but your friend standing beside you had different thoughts. He was a Catalonian, and he had lived through two years of raids. His thoughts were of the days to come, of Spain next year and the year after.

There was no way of knowing where the next bomb would drop or how long the raid would last. And for the moment it did not really matter whether it was Italian, German, or Franco aviation overhead.

We stood there staring at the hole in the street. It was not a large hole, and not very deep. Evidently only a fragment of a bomb had landed there. There was a much larger hole in the earth farther down the street, but that one had been blown open a week before and some of it had already been filled in with the brick and debris of the shattered apartment house beside it. You were told it was as if somebody had thrown an egg against a stone wall.

"We'll never give up," the Catalonian said. "We'll die with our backs against the wall before we'll give up. Every time they bomb us they are making it harder for the other side. We are going to stick it out as long as we are alive, because if we don't win, they'll kill us all anyway. There's only room enough for one side in Spain, and it's either us or them. We are going to fight for our lives as long as there's a handful of us left to fight."

It came to you then, during this lull in the raid,—and you understood the spirit of the people loyal to the government. You knew why these people would die before surrendering to Franco.

Franco could bomb every woman and child off the earth, he could starve every man to death, but he could never break the spirit of these people.

We walked out into the street and watched the little puffs of white smoke from anti-aircraft shells exploding in the sky. The aviation was so high it was out of sight, and their bombs were falling in the suburbs. They were afraid to stay over the city when the anti-aircraft guns got under way.

There were people all around us in the street, but no words were spoken. We stood there looking at these people of Spain, and realized why determination had taken the place of fear in their lives. Freedom was worth more to them than life itself.

We walked back towards the doorway in silence. The Catalonian stopped at the shell hole and searched for a fragment of the bomb that had exploded in the street.

"I wonder how it would feel to be a German or an Italian and to have a government that sends aviation and bombs to kill women and children in Barcelona." The Catalonian stopped and looked into the sky where the drone of aviation could be heard once more. "I wonder how it feels to be a man up there in one of those planes dropping bombs that blow the bodies of women and children into shreds of bloody pulp."

We walked slowly back to the doorway to wait for the raid to end.

John Malcolm Brinnin

FOR A YOUNG POET DEAD IN SPAIN

Music has saluted you,
And those assembled few
Felicities they bring the hero dead:
The praised imperfect flowers
Found on foreign moors,
Broken a little when the children fled

That monster with his wings across
The sudden Spanish wilderness.

Journals have recorded
What the music said.
The quick black print has named the circumstance,
The date not incorrect,
Not any outward fact
Impaled in paragraphs but does convince.
Impoverished of days, I know
Now ramparts that we stumbled to:

That genius of our thought,
(That sandalled runner) caught
Tall instants on the flood of some shared poem
Who, vision-weighted, slipped
Our vulnerable grip
And spread himself in shadows through the room.
Now he is yours, my dear, and far
Beyond the mirroring of fear.

O, Youth, who hesitated,
Precarious, April-hearted,
On the wide incommunicable plain,
Until our new world tracks
That headsman with his axe,
Immune our eyes to any land but Spain's;
In such communion to inspire
Glad squadrons from the hemispheres.

When new Spanish skies
In moon on moon of peace
Look down, un-swastikaed, on peoples' hills;
When earth, resurgent, springs
With prouder offerings,
Forsworn with love in their great common halls,
Men will re-name those passionately kept
In freedom's necessary crypt.

Vincent Sheean

PUIGCERDÀ

Let us find a suitable ditch, for the siren has sounded
and the air already aches with the humming of wings.
They are coming, the beasts that swim on the brink of our vision:
there will be ash and blood over familiar things.

Over the hearth and the field there will be weeping
when they have spun to their Pyrenean nest
to count with diligent glee the estate of their cargo,
joke at our terror, feed and lie down to rest.

They are here. Lie flat to the earth that bore you.
You may be part of it soon enough again.
Lie close, listen and tremble, tremble:
this is the thundering charge of the pirate men.

But the swan there,
the swan upon the water—
the swan's enchantment over the silver water—
moves still,
pure and proud,
disdains the shrapnel,
scorns the thunder.

The swan in beauty floats upon the lake,
serene before the choice that death must make.

Joseph North

HERO IN HORN-RIMMED GLASSES

I went up to Paris and somebody telephoned from the Herald Tribune that he heard from a mutual friend I was in town and he would like to come over and ask some questions about Spain.

"Fine," I said. "What's the name again?"

"Lardner," he said, "James Lardner."

"Any connection with Ring Lardner?" I asked.

"Some," he said. "I'm one of the sons."

"Fine," I answered. "I'd like to talk to a son of Ring Lardner. He should have some feeling for the Spanish Loyalists."

"He has," he said. "Quite a feeling."

He came to my room, a solemn, gawky lad, twisting around there, on the chair, asking about this and that.

"I'd like to go down to Spain," he said, "and visit the Lincoln-Washington battalion. Think there's a chance?" I wondered for a moment.

After all the Herald Tribune in New York is no friend of the people and the Paris edition's reason for living is to get a lot of ads from the Italian travel bureau and from the Third Reich to make it popular for tourists and I wondered.

But I looked at the lad—little over twenty, solemn, shy to the point of painfulness and I figured this could be no enemy of the people. If anything, something had trickled through to him of the heroism and the justice of the Spanish people's cause, so I encouraged the idea.

"Come on," I said heartily as I could. "Come on down, I'm sure the boys'd be glad to see you. A lot of your father's public

have joined the International Brigade, you know, all the lads that used to sit in the left field bleachers.”

He shook hands gratefully and left the room, stumbling over the carpet by the door.

I met him in Barcelona six weeks afterward.

“I got the editor to give me two weeks additional on my vacation,” he said, “and I came on down.”

“Good,” I said. But I wondered. After all these happened to be the worst days of the war. The enemy kept sweeping around the flanks of the Republicans, smashing on down from Belchite to the sea and it looked black. I wondered if this was the time for somebody like Ring Lardner’s son to be down here. Would he—could he—write a story that would look beneath the surface and see the resistance the people were mustering up right now while their troops were being pushed back at breakneck pace? Maybe it would be one of those pessimistic stories like that Britisher on the Express smuggled out after his flying trip to Valencia—that the jig was up and you could write “Finis” to the story of Spain.

But here was the kid, shuffling his feet around on the floor of the Hotel Majestic, twisting his fingers and asking when we thought he could get up to the front.

He went up after the Lincolns had gotten across the Ebro that first time—during the March-April days. Lots of boys had swum the river and they huddled together in the chilly Catalan fields reorganizing for the defense. And young Lardner lay on the floor of one of the huts talking with the men, getting an idea of what it was all about, and he lay there on the ground in a blanket one of the lads got for him and talked all through the night with the men and he liked the men.

“Ring would have liked these boys,” he confided to me. “The old man was no radical, that’s a fact, but he would have got the idea these boys came here for. He’d have said they got something on the ball. No ivory there, he’d have said. These boys are big

Next time I met young Jim he was asking how he could join up.

That gave me a start. I looked the lad over. He had his specs on again, reading *La Vanguardia*, spelling out the Spanish.

In that mousey way of his he got around, and next time I went up to the front there he was in the khaki of a Spanish Republican infantryman, peering through the sight of a rifle.

"Say," he asked me shyly, looking up from the gun, "would you do me a favor and send a cable home for me?"

"Glad to," I said.

He wrote it out with a stub of a pencil he borrowed from one of the boys named Bernie. It was to his mother in Milford, Conn. "Okay healthy dont worry love" it said.

Next time I met him he was up near the lines in a pair of ragged pants tramping at the head of a gang of Franco prisoners, Moors, Navarrese.

He carried his gun gingerly, stepping up that hot dusty road from the Ebro toward Toro de Espagnole.

"Got some Moors here too," he yelled happily.

We shook hands and I went on across the Ebro.

Next time I heard about him he was in the hospital with shrapnel wounds from a bomb.

"Not bad," he wrote me from the hospital, "just a few flesh wounds in a funny place. They're healing quick and I hope soon to be back at the front. Come up and see me some time and bring a lot of paper and a pencil, will you? And some copies of the New York Times if you can, I'd like to read what they say about our crossing the river."

I came up with pencil and paper and found him lying on his stomach on the cot doing some mathematical puzzle.

"I like to do this," he said, "when I got some spare time. I always got a kick out of math." He was from Princeton you know and picked up a lot of calculus there he told me.

His wounds healed fast, young and clean as he was. I urged him to come back to America soon as it could be arranged and go on a speaking tour.

"Think of the turnouts you'd have, getting the people hipped on Spain."

He shook his head. "No," he said, his eyes staring through his horn-rimmed glasses. "When I get all healed up I'm going back to the Brigade." I argued the point with him but he wouldn't budge.

"They still need men at the front," he said. "I joined up to go to the front."

Then he switched the subject. "Do me another favor, will you?" he asked. "Wire my mother again for me saying I'm okay. Please."

On the Ile de France back to America I read the ship's bulletin a few weeks afterward and it said James Lardner, son of Ring Lardner, volunteer with the I.B.'s was captured in the Ebro action. Later, when Ambassador Bowers checked it was said he was killed by the Moors.

He had gone on a scouting party into No Man's land in the Sierra Pandols—a particularly risky job—and they got him.

They got this big gawky quiet son of Ring Lardner—the kid that did mathematical puzzles for a pastime.

He wouldn't come home because he wanted to fight for an idea he liked.

What a story Ring could write about it if he was alive.

"My old man," he told me, "would have liked the I.B.'s. 'No ivory there,' he would have said—'big leaguers.'"

NOTE ON CONTRIBUTORS

This small anthology consists of a series of snapshots showing how Spain has cut into the conscience of Americans. It is hardly even a cross-section of what has already been put into words, for it is made up almost entirely of excerpts from the writings of a single literary group—the younger, social-minded, “proletarian” authors.

And even they are represented by only a few chips of their work on the Spanish theme. The sketches by Neugass are samples from a new 100,000-word manuscript describing his encounters on several fronts; his booklet poem, “Give Us This Day,” has just been published; he has also written a play about the war. S. Funaroff is completing a pamphlet-long poem on the fascist devastation of the country. Edwin Rolfe, who has been with the Loyalists for several years now, has sent home a lot of notes and impressions that some day will be shaped into print. Pereda had been using Spain as the chief setting for his stories long before the fascist outbreak; his sketch of the Asturian revolt, together with Alfred Hayes’ poem, “In Madrid,” both published three or four years ago, were forerunners of the material included here.

Rexroth and Newhouse show concretely how the Spanish issue pervades thinking and daily life in the U.S.A.—in San Francisco, New York or McKeesport. Wolff’s and Fearing’s poems, stamped by the same individual style and manner of their other writings, demonstrate how naturally the socio-political subject has become part of the perception of modern verse. Space makes it impossible to include at least two other equally characteristic selections—Muriel Rukeyser’s long “Mediterranean,” in her book *U.S.1*, and Saul Levitt’s story, “Return,” recently published in the *New Masses* (Oct. 18, 1938).

Newer recruits to this literary school, whose work is just getting into print, include Rosten and Brinnin—both of them still

in their very early twenties, both of them, interestingly, the current poetry winners in the University of Michigan's annual Hopwood contest; Rosten's poem is from his longer "Parade." Another newcomer, Joy Davidman, has several pieces on Spain in her *Letter to a Comrade*, the latest volume in the Yale Series of Younger Poets.

Vincent Sheean's poem, reprinted from the *New Masses* (together with such verse as Genevieve Taggard's "Silence in Mallorca," contained in her new *Collected Poems*; and Edna St. Vincent Millay's "Say That We Saw Spain Die," featured in a recent number of *Harpers*), gives the reader a glimpse of how Spain is touching the sensibility of other sections of intellectual America. Even more direct is the contact of on-the-spot observation, as recorded in Caldwell's and North's "reportage."

Sympathy and identification with the Spanish masses is not new in American literature. William Cullen Bryant—to mention the earliest instance—voiced his solidarity with the oppressed people whose uprising in the 1820's was subdued by foreign intervention; in "Romero," Bryant's Spanish character, exiled by the defeat of the revolution, prophesies that the time will come "When the spirit of the land to liberty shall bound, As yonder fountain leaps away from the darkness of the ground." Whitman, observing the defeat of the Spanish revolt of '73, wrote:

Out of the murk of heaviest clouds,
Out of the feudal wrecks and heap'd-up skeletons of kings,
Out of that old entire European debris, the shatter'd
mummeries . . .

Lo, Freedom's features fresh undimm'd look forth—
the same immortal face looks forth. . . .

Thou waitest there as everywhere thy time.

Conversely, liberal Spanish intellectuals have looked to American culture for inspiration and enlightenment.

The present collection has been assembled not only to emphasize this fraternal bond, but also to point to the extension which is slowly being made in the field of proletarian writing. This

pamphlet of poems and sketches on a single politico-social subject does indicate, if only in a small way, that revolutionary writers are learning to control their political wishes and resist grafting them upon literary structure; and at the same time to visualize the largest public questions from the pit of their personal feelings. Their writing is authentic in terms of their specific emotions and experience and not abstract or didactic like eighteenth-century versifying.

Another aspect of recent proletarian effort is accented by this small collection. Without trying any easy shortcuts, without penning jingles or success stories, these authors are striving to move toward a larger audience. They are refining, laboriously and conscientiously, the process of communication; aided by their new political themes and social symbols, which are familiar and central to many, they are trying to climb over a big obstacle between them and their audience—by changing from narrowly subjective to mass themes. Simultaneously, they are beckoning to the reader, pleading with him to shed the vulgar tastes he has acquired from the lowest layers of popular bourgeois culture; they urge the reader to exert as much energy in moving toward the written work as the writer expends in pushing that work towards the audience.

This is one of the chief reasons for cutting the anthology down to pamphlet size; this has been done in order to reach that unique American reading audience established by the chain of workers bookstores, which have created an unparalleled market for pamphlet literature throughout the country. If these readers respond favorably, they will make possible the continuation of this Literary Pamphlet Series, which obviously can be successful only if it obtains a mass circulation.

In the midst of immeasurable sacrifice to save Spain from swastika terrorism, it may be considered presumptuous to issue a mere literary booklet instead of a rousing agitational appeal, prompted by deep humanitarian desires rather than conditioned by a sense of literary realism. Yet in a minor way this collection is, of course, ammunition to be used against a charging enemy that must be stopped.

